

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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R 190815Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5395

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 9198

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINR, LE

SUBJECT: FURTHER ARRESTS RAISE TEMPERATURE IN PARTS OF BEIRUT

REF: BEIRUT 8982

1. SERIES OF ARRESTS AND RAIDS BY SECURITY FORCES BEGINNING EVENING JULY 16 AROUSED IRE OF LOCAL INHABITANTS OF AFFECTED QUARTERS (ZARIF, ZAYDANIYAH, AISHA AL BAKAR, AND TALAT AL KHAYYAT). GOL AUTHORITIES, WHO CLAIMING ARRESTS ON SUSPICION OF BOMBINGS AND LOOTING DURING RECENT CLASHES, HAVE NOT RPT NOT LINKED SEVEN SUSPECTS SEIZED WITH ARAB COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION (ACO), ALTHOUGH ORIGINAL ACO SUSPECTS WERE APPREHENDED IN ZARIF.

2. SEVEN PERSONS, ALL MALE MOSLEMS, ARE REPORTEDLY MEMBERS OF GROUP CALLED "EAGLES OF ZAYDANIYAH," WHICH PRO-SYRIAN DAILY "ASH SHARQ" (JULY 18, 1975) IDENTIFIES AS ALLY OF SYRIAN-SPONSORED PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION, SA'IQA. THREE OF SEVEN
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DETAINEES WERE RELEASED EVENING JULY 17 AND LEFTIST PRESS

IS CHARGING THAT THEY HAD BEEN TORTURED. FOLLOWING ARRESTS, ARMED MEN APPEARED IN STREETS AND ON ROOFTOPS OF AREAS NAMED ABOOE AND BARRICADES WERE ERECTED. DURING JULY 17, THERE WERE SEVERAL REPORTS OF SHOOTING BUT FEW DETAILS WERE MADE AVAILABLE. WE UNDERSTAND OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS OF INHABITANTS' ANGER ARE LESS VISIBLE JULY 18 BUT TENSIONS, FANNED BY LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS AND PRESS, PERSIST.

3. IN MEETING AFTERNOON JULY 17, REPRESENTATIVES OF LEFTIST PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS MET TO CONSIDER MATTER AND CHARGED GOL WITH "PROVOCATION" IN ARRESTING SEVEN INSTEAD OF PHAL-ANGISTS WHO ARE ALLEGED BY LEFT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR "AIN RUMANNEH MASSACRE" OF APRIL 13, 1975. DEMANDING THE RELEASE OF ALL SEVEN ARRESTEES, LEFTIST GAGGLE IMPLIED FURTHER ACTION, INCLUDING RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING OR GENERAL STRIKE, IF THEIR DEMANDS ARE NOT MET. POLITICAL CONTACTS ARE REPORTEDLY UNDER WAY TO RESOLVE SITUATION.

4. SEVERAL DAILIES ON JULY 18 DISPUTED LEFTIST CLAIM THAT GOL ACTING SOLELY AGAINST "PROGRESSIVES" AND MOSLEMS. ACCORDING TO THESE ACCOUNTS, FIVE PERSONS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN LAST FEW DAYS IN AIN RUMANNEH AND FURN ASH SHUBAK (CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORHOODS) ON SUSPICION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOMBINGS. DURING EARLY MORNING HOURS JULY 18 ROAD NORTH OF BEIRUT WAS BLOCKED FOR SEVERAL HOURS. ROAD NOW CLEAR, ACCORDING TO GOL AUTHORITIES.

5. COMMENT: TENSIONS WHICH ENJOYED RESURGENCE OVER LAST TWO DAYS APPEAR WORRISOME, BUT CONTROLABLE AS OF AFTERNOON JULY 18, ASSUMING MORE FUEL NOT ADDED TO FIRE. BUT, THESE INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATE HOW CLOSE LEBANON REMAINS TO BRINK OF FOURTH ROUND AND FACILITY WITH WHICH ELEMENTS WITH AN INTEREST IN EXACERBATING SECURITY SITUATION COULD INFLAME PASSIONS AND, POSSIBLY, SET OFF MORE FIGHTING. COUNTRY, HOWEVER, ENJOYS ONE ADVANTAGE WHICH IT DID NOT HAVE IN EARLY STAGES OF LAST THREE ROUNDS (APRIL THROUGH EARLY JULY)--STRONG, ESTABLISHED GOVT.
GODLEY

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